

Ted Bravakis

Q: Interview, Theodore Bravakis. June 17th, 1999. OK. Where did your family come from in Greece?

A: My father came from Monemvasia, Sikia. And my mother from Sparti, Badura.

Q: Why did they come to America?

A: Living. Better living of course. They were married here.

Q: That's all right. You just go ahead and speak.

A: They were married here. The match was made here by their brothers -- by her brothers who were married at that time.

Q: So you were born in the United States.

A: All of us were born.

Q: Where did they come to when they came to the United States?

A: I don't know how they wound up in Newark. They were (inaudible).

Q: Really.

A: I couldn't understand why some people go to Newark, some go to New York, they knew where they were going. But I guess they did. They just were told to go there (inaudible) community.

Q: Where did they live in Newark?

A: (inaudible) Summit Place is down by the Newark Tech -- it used to be Newark Tech, now it's New Jersey College of Engineering. Central High School is right next to it.

Q: Right.

A: And that's where we lived. A cold-water flat.

Q: And you were born in Newark. Did you go to school --

A: All born in Newark. I went to Broad Street School and (inaudible) School. I graduated eighth grade.

Q: Terrific. When they came and settled in Newark -- I asked all those questions. I'm going to go all over the place. To what Greek American organizations did you belong when you --

A: When I was born?

Q: Well, when you lived in Newark.

A: Oh my first one was Sons of Pericles. After the Sons of Pericles I went into the AHEPA. And (inaudible) Italian clubs, you don't want to --

Q: Well, yes, what other clubs did you belong to, not just the Greek American, but American clubs?

A: (inaudible) Platform Association and John (inaudible) Association.

Q: That's interesting. Why?

A: Two different stories. Two different groups. They're Democrats.

Q: Oh, all right. So you joined the Democratic Party through the Italian clubs.

A: We were first Republicans actually. But when John Peters came into the family, he was a staunch Democrat. We all became Democrats.

Q: When did your parents come to the United States? What year?

A: My father -- I think it was -- you saw the paper. 1902 I think the paper says. Yeah that's it exactly. You could read it (inaudible) yeah arrived in the port of New York on April 1902, 22nd day.

Q: In the port of New York. Where did he go from Ellis Island?

A: Port of New York (inaudible) I guess they just landed there.

Q: Did they land in Ellis Island or --

A: (inaudible) all I can tell you about that.

Q: All right. And your mother? When did she come?

A: She must have come in a little earlier. I'm not sure. Because her brother, one brother -- she had three brothers. One younger brother was here. But the others (inaudible) one of them came and is buried at Woodland Cemetery. Way back then.

Q: And they lived in Newark too?

A: They evidently did. I don't know. And the match was because they were two tough guys, the brothers, and my father the same, used to carry a gun. And (inaudible) a gun, we all did in those days. They matched. They made a match with my mother. I understand about my mother a lot of -- I don't want to mention names in Newark. Were after my mother to marry her. But they weren't tough enough for her brothers evidently.

Q: Well, you can mention names, that would be good. That would be good to mention names.

A: One is William Fennick, Tony Jarvis, who's the other one, Tony Jarvis, the other one is -- at least three of them. Who is the third guy? Anyhow.

Q: And they weren't tough enough for your --

A: No. For my uncles.

Q: For your uncles. They had to be (inaudible) what business did your parents have in Newark?

A: My father worked for the leather factory for a while. My uncle had the ice business, used to supply all the restaurants downtown, because they didn't have refrigeration that time. And when he died my father took over. Got another wagon and another horse. And they had two teams

going. And of course he hired --

Q: Do you remember the name of the ice business? Do you remember what it was called? The name?

A: J. Bravakis Ice.

Q: J. Bravakis Ice.

A: And he picked up 100 pounds of ice just like you pick up this piece of paper. Want to hear another little story?

Q: Yes please. That's what we're here for.

A: You know how (inaudible) Atlanta Theater to Market Street. Come out of Atlanta Place. My father had taken me one afternoon in the summer for the second -- this was a ride. He was making a delivery. And he had with him (inaudible) a cousin of my mother's who picked up a ten-cent piece of ice. And my father was mad as the dickens. So he goes into this (inaudible) restaurant. Goes in the back. The wagon rides up to the door. The alley is closed as far as he's concerned. He picked up the ice and hoists it up to the top of the (inaudible) meantime another truck, Daley or Derry, a black man, was coming in, blowing his horn. He wanted to get out this way. My father doesn't pay any attention (inaudible) he kept about his business, taking the ice inside and running upstairs. Finally comes outside. The black man is yelling. He picks up a (inaudible) Atlanta

Theater. And (inaudible) my father. My father went very quiet. He went in the back of the wagon. Opened up the pair of tongs. And he says come on you black son of a bitch (inaudible) that guy got in that truck (inaudible) as though it was yesterday. And backed right out of the alley (inaudible).

Q: That's why your father's brother-in-law wanted him. How old were you at the time?

A: Well, I was ten when he died, so I must have been about seven, six or seven, going for the ride. Seeing a thing like that.

Q: I just brought a story I had written about your father. That's included in the other things.

Q: Terrific.

Q: I've taken a little editorializing.

Q: Of course, of course.

Q: But that represents the way most people grew up.

A: My father.

Q: Teddy, so you worked with your father as you were growing up.

A: No, I didn't work with my father. No, I didn't work with my father.

Q: All right. What did you do when you finished school?

A: I was an errand boy for Sulis Malakakis, had a grocery store (inaudible) slice, do small errands in the store. And I'd get paid with a bag of fruits and vegetables, see. After that, I worked for -- I would go downtown selling papers. And I hated that.

Q: Why?

A: I used to work (inaudible) selling papers. Can you imagine that? And I quit that and I went to (inaudible) delivering Greek papers.

Q: Plain Street?

A: Plain Street. It was on Banks Street first. And I got that job. And one winter -- Angelo was a young fellow my age, a friend of mine, I forget his last name, he was working there before. He'd go down to Penn Station, pick up the Greek papers from New York, and I'd meet him in front of Banbury's, Washington and Market. Come by, and we'd carry it to the store. And it was cold. I was -- the heck with this, I'm going home. I quit that job. Well, that's when I worked for (inaudible).

Q: And how old were you then about?

A: Ten, 11, 12, somewhere.

Q: So when did you start doing errands? What age?

A: I must have been eight years old, seven years old.

Q: Started doing errands for different people. And generally you worked for Greek --

A: No wait a minute now. My father was living -- no, he wasn't living, he died. I was ten years old when he died. So --

Q: So you started doing errands.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you work mostly for Greeks who were in the area?

A: Yeah. I needed a job (inaudible) but anyhow we needed the money. My mother needed the money. And my brother George got a job with B&B Press (inaudible).

Q: Who owned B&B Press?

A: The printer, the Greek printer, they taught me printing (inaudible).

Q: That's Matthew (inaudible).

A: There are two Matthews.

Q: The father you're talking about. He's talking about Matthew (inaudible).

A: (inaudible) the father was Nate and Gus. OK (inaudible) they each had Matthews. Name was Matthew. They had their

own shops, each one of them, doing very well. And the rest of the family worked under them. The old people (inaudible) anyhow my brother George was working there as an errand boy and he delivered menus. But before (inaudible) waitresses and so forth (inaudible) make sure you look good.

Q: Tell the story. What he used to use to keep his hair back. Valentino.

A: Oh, somebody [Greek].

Q: [Greek].

A: He rubbed it, all the flies came out.

Q: I was just going to say that. I was just going to say that. That's hysterical.

A: So anyhow I said George can't you get me a job with B&B Press, an errand boy or something? He said I'll ask him. So I went down. I got the job. George (inaudible).

Q: How old were you when you got the job?

A: At that time I had to be 11 or 12 I think. So they were very good to me. And when they fired him, I'm [Greek] which I did. And I delivered all the menus. And then they sent me to (inaudible) in Brooklyn (inaudible) I loved that machine (inaudible) machines. And (inaudible) that job, the other errand boy was Spiro Poulos. The other errand boy.

He'd go up and work at B&B Press.

Q: John Poulos was his brother, right? I mean Peter Poulos was John's brother.

A: Yeah he's the oldest of the family, Spiro. George, a sister and Peter.

Q: Did they live in Newark too, the Pouloses?

A: Yeah, the Pouloses did.

Q: I have her interview. And it's very interesting.

Q: Mrs. Poulos's.

A: So he'd bring the menus. I'd typeset them up, print them, and then deliver them. If I had time off, I'd go off (inaudible) sit there, smoke a cigarette and have a Coke or something.

Q: At the age of 12?

A: Yeah. I started at ten.

Q: (inaudible) that picture.

A: I used to go to -- at that time I'd go to Broad Street, have lunch. And they used to have crap games there. And I used to play craps. Nine out of ten times I'd come out (inaudible) a winner. Not big money. But money (inaudible).

Q: Was it owned by Greeks?

A: No, no (inaudible).

Q: Italian club too.

A: (inaudible) Italian club.

Q: So you were not only involved with the Greeks but with the neighborhood people also.

A: Oh yeah. Tell you one thing. During the war you couldn't get flour, potatoes, sugar. You got it. Italians took care of you. Mother got (inaudible) needed anything (inaudible) obligated either. You'd get whatever you need, what you needed, see. This one time they called me. It was Al Carbone and (inaudible) Mafiosi (inaudible) but they were friends of mine. Say sir, we got a meeting tonight, you want to come in, maybe give you a job (inaudible) yeah, all right. So I go and they want me to print the Italian lottery tickets once a week.

Q: This is (inaudible).

A: 200 pieces. About this big, see. You have to put a little more (inaudible) numbers on the side. And I'll give you \$200. \$200! I said I'm sorry, but I don't want the job (inaudible).

Q: These were Mafia laundry tickets to -- oh, to launder --

A: No, not laundry, Italian.

Q: Italian lottery.

A: Italian lottery. Different neighborhoods. Italian neighborhood (inaudible) other people would get them and give them to me for instance and I'd print them and send them out. Because it wouldn't take me long. It's about no more than a half hour's work actually. No more than a half hour's work. \$200 a week --

Q: Big money.

Q: Of course. But why did you turn it down? You were afraid of the Mafia?

A: Of course.

Q: He didn't want to get involved.

A: Of course (inaudible) once they have their hooks on you boy, you're stuck. So I (inaudible).

Q: That's a good story. That's interesting. That's something. That's classic.

Q: Your mother raised you.

A: She was terrific (inaudible) by the way. The shop was in the wholesale floral district on New and Plain, Washington (inaudible) B&B Press was on top of Poulos's. Which became Lollos Floral later on. It's their building. On Saturdays they all closed. So I'd go downstairs. Take my \$3, go

downstairs, get a bunch of flowers, run up the hill to my mother, give her the flowers, give her the \$3, she'd give me ten cents (inaudible) and I'd sit there and I'd play (inaudible) this is not bragging. The phonograph (inaudible) and when I wanted to go in business I needed \$1,000. So I told my mother. She said all right. She gave me \$1,000.

Q: What year was that?

A: [Greek] I was 25 years old. 25 years old (inaudible).

Q: (inaudible).

A: (inaudible).

Q: So you were 25 years old.

A: That's when I started, yeah (inaudible) Italian boy that was working for B&B Press, we started together.

Q: Finish the story about your mother giving you the \$1,000.

A: She gave me the \$1,000 and that was it (inaudible).

Q: What did she tell you?

A: I said [Greek].

Q: She saved the \$3 a week to reach the \$1,000.

A: \$3 a week.

Q: That is wonderful.

A: And another time (inaudible) my mother after my father died. An uncle of mine came and they went in one room and they came out in no time. When he left she had 800 dollar bills, something like that. I said [Greek] that was really something that he turned over --

Q: And he paid (inaudible).

A: And then later on (inaudible) my kid brother got sick and -- he didn't get sick, he got an appendix. And he's a boy that was 20 years old. He was all-city athlete, football, baseball.

Q: All-city Newark?

A: (inaudible) honorable mention for all-state (inaudible) and got an attack of appendicitis. And we took him to the hospital. And the doctor, I (inaudible) now even though he's dead. What the heck was his name?

Q: Elsinet.

A: Elsinet. He was the head man at Beth Israel. He operated and he went on vacation. And they left a shoemaker of a nephew to take care of things. Well, the next day went to see (inaudible) operation. The next man says -- called me over. He says your brother was crying all night last night. He was moaning and crying all niht.

Q: (inaudible) peritonitis.

A: Yeah, yeah. And we didn't know what to do. He was there. We went to ask the other doctor. He said well, can't do anything. One good intern in there, Jewish fellow, come in, he says (inaudible) can't do anything (inaudible) can't do anything about it, as much as I would love to do it.

Q: Why?

A: Didn't come into that -- I'll tell you about it. Malavazos came. He said come on, we'll go up and see your brother. We went up (inaudible) at that time they didn't have the --

Q: Penicillin.

A: Penicillin, whatever it is. But the irony of it. After we had the funeral and all that, we're sitting down (inaudible) because I didn't want to go out. My mother, my sisters. I pick up the paper. And they pick up a drunkard. A drunkard. And they took him in and they experimented. He had the same thing. They experimented with him. I'm reading the paper. Can you imagine that (inaudible).

Q: But you have to tell the story of your mother and how she raised you kids, what she used for money, how she made money.

A: Oh she was a bootlegger.

Q: Go ahead. That's wonderful.

A: We'd make wine because our father used to make wine.

Q: His father died in October and he bought all the grapes.

A: All the grapes were outside (inaudible) grapes were outside the thing. And she had to send them back. And luckily they took it back. But she started making wine. And people down at coffee houses all knew about (inaudible) they wouldn't call, they'd send messengers. Yeah my mother put a telephone in at that time for business (inaudible) call up, send three gallons.

Q: What year was this?

A: He died in '23. So it had to be '24. Year later. And she'd make the wine. And I'd take a gallon, skate down. George would go first with one gallon. I'd go down (inaudible) later, another, we'd collect the money, bring it up to my mother. No Mother used to go down (inaudible) and she'd deliver (inaudible) then she started making ouzo too from the chicola of the wine. She used to make chicola. She used to make ouzo (inaudible) was in the bathtub. Because it was a cold-water flat. And (inaudible) nice and warm. The bootlegger would bring the alcohol, and she'd mix it (inaudible) warmest place in the house, you get up in the morning. Yoing (inaudible) first one who was in there (inaudible) comfortable (inaudible).

Q: And who was the bootleg -- go ahead, I'm sorry.

A: Well, the bootlegger was -- one fellow had the saloon around the corner. He was married to a -- lived with a black woman. Mulatto. And she caught him cheating once and she (inaudible) something like that. And he put himself together and he went to Saint Michael's Hospital. He died. I forget his name. Nice quiet guy.

Q: But he wasn't Greek.

A: No, he wasn't Greek. Italian man. Italian.

Q: But the other thing though, tell about how your neighbors used to protect your mother when they came around for inspection.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: The Crescenti (inaudible).

A: Yeah. Midas's father, God bless him, was caught by the police.

Q: This is Pete Midas.

A: Peter Midas.

Q: Peter Midas.

A: Yeah. Lived on the first floor.

Q: He was bootlegging too?

A: He was trying to. He was trying to. The cops got him and he squealed on my mother. So the landlord, like a bulldog, said what are you guys doing, you got a search warrant or anything. They left. They wouldn't let anybody in. Then I think he got rid of Pete Midas's father too. But she used to tell me (inaudible) what's so wonderful about that?

Q: How they protected her, because they knew she was a widow raising a family. And they would do anything for her.

A: She wouldn't let anybody give us anything. Don't take anything from --

Q: Why?

A: (inaudible).

Q: Who owned the building? Italians?

A: No (inaudible) Cresenza, used to be (inaudible) Crezenzi. Well, he had asthma, so he couldn't sleep in the summer, he'd have the window open (inaudible) he looked like a bulldog, a big guy. My garage is right across the street. This is the house where I lived, right about -- it's about no wider -- a little -- the street was a little bit wider than this (inaudible) so I got home at 2:00 (inaudible) I know my mother was upstairs watching looking out the window. So I'm going across the street. Oh boy, if I get that door open without it squeaking I'll be all right. So I get up

there and the door -- stupid doors are squeaking (inaudible) squeaking again. I get (inaudible) this is a hell of a time for you to come home (inaudible) shut the window. And he put the lights in the hall so I could go up. That's the kind of people they were.

Q: That's a case where it takes a village.

Q: Yes exactly.

Q: Everybody knew one another. Doors were never locked.

Q: How old were you about this time when you were (inaudible) on Saturday night (inaudible).

A: I was 18, 17, 18, years old. Couldn't be much older than that.

Q: How much did the car cost at that time?

A: \$1,000. I remember it now.

Q: How did you pay for it? Just out of curiosity.

A: I don't know. I think my mother paid.

Q: Your mother paid for it.

Q: From her bootlegging money.

A: Yeah.

Q: By then the girls had started to work too (inaudible).

A: (inaudible) was working. George was working but (inaudible)

look what I won, Mom, look what I won.

Q: Real playboy.

Q: What did your sisters do? What types of jobs did they have?

A: Catherine and my sister Stella worked for RCA (inaudible) and Catherine worked for a while at a thrift shop on Plain and Washington. There's a big (inaudible) it sounded like Tasavis but --

Q: Tasaco?

A: (inaudible) Tasaco Restaurant no. Anyhow, after that she got a job at RCA. She used to go to -- worked there for a while.

Q: Doing what?

A: I don't know what they did.

Q: (inaudible) work, whatever.

A: I guess it was --

Q: Where was RCA? In Harrison?

A: It was in Harrison, yeah. It was a big building, big company.

Q: Well, Stella got married when she was 17, so --

A: So that was (inaudible).

Q: When you bought the store, did you employ Greek Americans to

help out at the store?

A: At my shop?

Q: Right.

A: (inaudible).

Q: No, but before that you (inaudible).

A: (inaudible) Italian boy.

Q: Right. So it was just the two of you working.

A: Just the two of us working. And we weren't doing too much.

Q: Where was it located, the first store?

A: The first store, on Rankin Street, Rankin Street below Belmont Avenue, two blocks below. On the left coming down. It's not there.

Q: What was the name of the store?

A: What's that?

Q: What'd you call the store? What was the name?

A: Merit Press.

Q: It was always the Merit Press.

A: Oh, no, we started -- I'm sorry. We started American Printing on New Street. The shop that B&B started the thing -- they moved (inaudible) we had that. And then we got a (inaudible) managing the other store, the other shop, said

let's merge. Because they were doing all building (inaudible) we were doing menus. So we merged, because we weren't doing too -- yeah. We merged and moved up to Rankin Street. And all of a sudden I'm making \$35 a week. That's a lot of money. So I'm walking (inaudible) Jim got out. And Andy wanted to get out. He had a wife that always wanted money. And I had a car.

Q: It wasn't that she wanted money. She wanted a steady income.

Q: Steady income (inaudible) right, exactly.

A: I had a car and I sold it for \$1,000.

Q: What kind of a car did you have?

A: A Buick. Always had a Buick. I sold it. What I paid for it, I got it back. I remember I sold it (inaudible) real agencies. Two brothers. And one Italian (inaudible) come up to my house, I told my mother to give you the bill of sale. Well, I closed the rest of the deal. I did that. And just count the money. \$1,000, put it in my pocket (inaudible) bill of sale. He says you know how to sell cars. Says you know how to sell cars (inaudible) didn't work (inaudible).

Q: Oh, God, that's funny. When did you two get married?

Q: 1943.

Q: How did you meet?

A: Well, the first time -- she was 16 years old (inaudible) Penelope (inaudible) the daughters (inaudible).

Q: (inaudible) at that time.

A: Two cars. I was driving one car with the girls down. And the other car was going down driven by my sister I think. Or Rattas, yeah. And after their meeting they went to my sister's house. My married sister.

Q: Where was the meeting?

A: This is Trenton. It was in Trenton. So I was tired. I went upstairs. I was taking a nap and they came. I looked downstairs.

Q: And (inaudible).

A: And I see Lee (inaudible).

Q: (inaudible).

A: 16 years old. I'll keep my eyes on her.

Q: How old were you?

A: I'm seven years older.

Q: 23?

A: Yeah (inaudible) I walk in and I see her sitting in the lobby with another guy. This is (inaudible) so I said I'm

going to wait (inaudible) he has to go to the bathroom.

END OF SIDE A

Q: Continue. Now what happened at the (inaudible).

A: So I grab her, ask her for a dance (inaudible) danced all over the place. I don't know what happened to the other guy (inaudible) and then her mother, God bless her (inaudible) who's that boy dancing with my daughter [Greek] she finally wound up with my aunt. My aunt Dora (inaudible) I couldn't do anything wrong [Greek].

Q: They took us home that night.

Q: You lived in Montclair, right?

A: (inaudible) mother taught Greek.

Q: And John Bemis was your --

A: My brother-in-law.

Q: Your brother-in-law at that time. Catherine was married.

A: Yeah, yeah. And those were good days. Good days. We used to (inaudible) used to like to sing too. We used to get in the car, the two of us, ride around and sing. And dancing of course. We always danced.

Q: And when you got married where did you live?

A: Crescent Avenue in Newark.

Q: Where did we live?

Q: Where did you live?

Q: After we got married.

A: Oh, after we got married. Oh, we lived in Montclair, because -- just her father there.

Q: But at the time that you married her you were living in Newark at the time.

A: (inaudible) yeah so --

Q: Did you always live on Summit Street?

A: No. From Summit Place, we moved to Columbia Avenue. You're talking about the family, Bravakis.

Q: Talking about your family, right.

A: We moved to Columbia. This is after my brother Lou died. And we lived on Columbia Avenue (inaudible) Jewish, the owner was a good man (inaudible) buy this house. Take my house. It's a good house. It's a good luck house. The other house on Columbia Avenue, my mother would go downstairs and put something in the fire. And the furnace would back out on her. Catherine would go out, hang clothes, and the pole fell over, just missed her. Three things happened. I forget what the other was. So I said we

better get out. We moved to (inaudible) Avenue. We (inaudible) Columbia just three months I think (inaudible) more than that.

Q: This was an apartment that you rented, right?

A: Yeah we rented.

Q: What were the rents in those days? First on Summit and then --

A: Oh on Summit Place very expensive. \$28 a month.

Q: And it was a cold-water flat?

A: They were cold-water flats (inaudible) \$28 (inaudible) you know, my mother used to pay two months' rent for that (inaudible).

Q: Tremendous difference. And then the rent at -- well, you didn't stay there long. At West End?

A: West End Avenue was good luck right away. Catherine got to meet John (inaudible) plans for the wedding.

Q: Did they live nearby?

A: No, he lived in Patterson.

Q: After they (inaudible).

A: Oh, after they got married? After they got married?

Q: He was from Patterson and after they got married John moved

to Newark?

A: No, no, they lived in Patterson.

Q: They lived in Patterson.

A: Oh, they lived in Newark next door for a while, yeah.

Q: Next door to West End.

A: Next door to us yeah.

Q: Father Spiridaki lived up the street.

A: Yeah that's (inaudible) Lindsay Avenue where he lived (inaudible) right into the house where we lived if you came down (inaudible).

Q: Were there many Greeks in that area?

A: Not too many. About maybe three, four families. The Pouloses were further down. Spiridakis. Who else? Patris. Patris (inaudible).

Q: Dr. Patris, the dentist, right.

A: His family. They lived next door. And oh yeah, there was -- on Columbia Avenue there was Dedusis and (inaudible) [two families] there. I remember that. And then I got married. We lived in Montclair.

Q: But you still kept the business in Newark.

A: Oh yeah, yeah. And I bought a Chevrolet car from [one of

the old boys in the neighborhood]. It was 35 dollars. And then when it started -- start the motor, got into it, you could hear me miles away. (laughter; inaudible)

M: That's amazing.

A: (inaudible) [father-in-law who was] (inaudible) my father-- we had a [colored man had the car] next door to the shop, and [he'd see the] green Buick and he asked how much. 600 dollars. [Teddy, you take that car, you pay] 600 dollars (inaudible) and (inaudible) but --

Q: Did you go to St. Nicholas [in mass, to the church]?

A: Oh yeah (inaudible) St. Nicholas, of course.

Q: When did you sit on the board of St. Nicholas?

A: It was [like -- well, the man Gellas] was (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Now what do you remember when St. Nicholas was first down on -- what was it? [Warren] --

A: [Down the street, right].

Q: Academy Street.

A: I don't know a lot about that. Before that, as I was telling [the] -- down at the -- [they had had] the storefront store. My father and mother (inaudible) [Cabot Street]. But I found out that the (inaudible) church,

[close to] nine thousand dollars [they're] (inaudible) building. It's a nice building. [But] nine thousand dollars, you know, it's (inaudible) [we played] -- baseball now, we're talking about baseball.

Q: Right.

A: All the big guys -- let's say [they got brought tonight from], just -- Teddy, tomor-- George, you -- tomorrow you play the (inaudible; inaudible) the next day, Teddy, you [fight] Michael there.

Q: After Greek school?

A: After Greek school. On the street. And they're young guys, young kids, and we used to shoot marbles next door, see? We were on top of the hill (inaudible) you stand on top of that hill and look down, you could see Broad Street, all the way down. So we played (inaudible) you look down and (inaudible) a big long stride for a (inaudible) and when we saw a derby (inaudible) walking with -- talking big steps with [a valissa] (inaudible) [get in line, get in line, get ready for] --

Q: Was he your teacher?

A: He was the teacher, yeah, (inaudible) yeah. And later on --

Q: Who was the priest?

A: Spiridakis.

Q: Oh, [from that] time?

A: Yeah.

M: Spiridakis.

A: (inaudible) the church. (inaudible) Spiridakis (inaudible)

Q: [No].

A: -- but it's all due respect [to Father Lupus and that] other guy who (inaudible)

Q: Well, [good PR]. But let's go to Father Spiridakis.

A: Okay. Father Spiridakis (inaudible) [all right, we're in class], and the [trees up there, back door's] -- but the door's in back of us. And [over our shoulder] we hear (inaudible) really quiet. (inaudible) look around, it's Spiridakis, very carefully opening the door to see what he was doing, to make sure he was (inaudible)

Q: When did they get -- when did Father Spiridakis come to the church [in there]? In other words, he lived in Newark --

A: Oh, he lived [in] --

Q: -- before he was a priest?

A: No, no, no.

Q: All right.

A: He was -- [lived in Turkey].

Q: Oh, he lived in Turkey.

A: (inaudible)

Q: Yes, at the theological school there, yes.

A: Yeah. That's right [he went to] --

Q: Oh wow.

A: Yeah.

Q: And when did he come to Newark? When he became a priest?

M: [I think this was his first] community, yeah. I think it was his first community.

A: And he did everything. I mean, he shoveled snow, he [put cars] --

M: Oh yeah, he shoveled snow.

A: (inaudible) he shoveled snow --

Q: I want to hear (inaudible)

A: But all [he had to do was] walk around the [room] in church today -- you'll see kids running around and people coming in not dressed properly -- (laughter)

Q: Yeah, right, right.

A: -- all you'd have to do is -- he'd look at you, [so you -- just] look at you and [you'd best] straighten out, [and that

is] -- and boy, (inaudible) [pew on the right] and look him up. And (inaudible) and he'd look -- whatever you're doing, just stop it (inaudible)

M: [We] remember -- she used to beat the heck out of me.
(laughter) [It's like, wait] --

Q: With that ruler --

A: [Oh, all the] (inaudible) yeah, [everybody] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) yeah, that was -- anyway, go ahead, [yeah].

Q: [So get into more] stories about Father Spiridakis and how he helped build the church on High Street. What -- you know, [the things] that he did.

A: A lot of people that were -- didn't like Spiridakis because he was too strict. I liked him because he was strict, you know. But when I say the -- like (inaudible) [until the new church came], that's where [it all got started] (inaudible) came, [priests] (inaudible) came first I think and -- [oh yeah, the park, near the park], that came later and so forth. And [that's] (inaudible)

Q: That's right, [they're not there] (inaudible)

A: Yeah, they're like (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) [the president was a] coffee house owner. [My nephew's] (inaudible) [Sakalakos].

Q: (inaudible)

A: [Miss Sakalakos]. It sounded like Sakalakos --

M: [Sakalaris]?

A: Yeah, no, it might be Sakalaris.

Q: No.

A: No, no.

M: Sakalaris?

A: No, [pizza place] (inaudible) [you want to know about the board].

Q: [In the booth].

A: [Okay] (inaudible) I'll put your name up there. Put his name up. (inaudible) so the third time (inaudible) you had to elect six out of six. (laughter) [booth] that's [hard, right]?

Q: So they [had] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) but --

A: But Spiridakis, he was a good hearted person. He didn't show it, you know. [And there's a lot of things that would have been -- that you might laugh because he's riding with the] (inaudible) [because the bathroom] -- you'd stop at a gas station, and he'd come out first, she's always sitting in the back. He'd come out, get in the car, start going, then they realized --

Q: That he'd left her there? (laughter)

A: He had to go back and get her.

M: I can just picture that! (laughter) (inaudible)

A: [She'd be] -- and one time -- so she had some guy come and then (inaudible) so much money, and [they were giving gold pieces] and they [had a bag] and Kugerrands and this gold --

M: Gold.

A: -- [and, of course, it's -- well, let me know]. So he did that, got all excited. It was in the papers, too. [So he got] --

Q: In the American paper?

A: Yeah, yeah. And it turned out to be washers, that -- he took the bag and didn't even open it. It was washers.

M: What year was that? Do you remember the year? (inaudible) year?

A: [I don't know].

Q: That's all right, we're going to (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) we're going to go to [The Newark Call], because that was the original paper before The Newark Star-Ledger.

F: Yeah.

M: Look it up.

A: Yeah. No, no. Before the Star-Ledger -- the Star-Eagle.

Q: Star-Eagle.

A: Star-Eagle was the -- Star-Ledger was nothing. It was a Sunday -- [they worked as Sunday] -- were there too papers at that time? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Three, three.

Q: The Star-Eagle --

A: The Star-Ledger -- the [first one] -- (inaudible) was the best one.

Q: (inaudible)

A: That's (inaudible) building below the Paramount Theater going down on the left --

M: Right, okay.

A: -- used to be the newspaper.

M: Right.

A: And there was a Sunday [Call].

Q: Sunday Call.

M: Sun-- yeah, Sunday paper.

A: Plus (inaudible)

Q: [But] I think the Sunday Call became the Star-Ledger.

A: No, no.

Q: No?

A: No. The --

Q: [Newark News]?

A: The Ledger took over the Sun-Eagle. So (inaudible) that's why they have Star-Ledger. Before it was just Newark-Ledger. But The Star-Eagle was the better paper. Ledger (inaudible) they had no competition. (inaudible) you pick up the paper -- every time that -- I don't know if you (inaudible) [you turn it there are] -- several pages falling out, you can't fold it right --

M: All right.

A: -- but the --

Q: Well, I agree with you.

A: -- no competition, right. So he did a lot of good things there, Father Spiridakis, yeah. I liked him, [I don't know].

M: [And he] -- the church was always very quiet with --

A: You got to be quiet, yeah (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: He was a -- I know my brother John who is a priest, you know, [every time] he came home, he would always go down to see Father Spiridakis because he said he could always advise him, because John was so young -- he could always advise

him.

A: So --

Q: He'd always go [down there].

A: -- the -- and when my mother died, after the service, [he had been the first caller, because] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) [get closer to me, get closer, you tell] (inaudible)

Q: What did he -- did he get involved in the community outside of the Greek community?

A: No.

Q: (inaudible)

A: No.

Q: Yeah. Did St. Nicholas at any time get involved with [others] (inaudible) community?

A: Oh, I'll tell -- any community?

Q: Yeah, any -- I'm talking about in Newark proper.

A: Yeah.

Q: What things did the Greeks in Newark get involved with as -- governmentally -- did they participate in (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: -- with the church?

Q: Or even the Greeks themselves. Any Greek Americans? Did they get involved in any of the --

A: Oh, yeah, politicians. There were politicians.

Q: Yeah?

F: How 'bout Jimmy Post? Wasn't he --

A: Jimmy Post and Pappas. Jimmy Post, well --

F: Oh, wasn't he involved in politics?

Q: In Newark?

F: (inaudible)

A: No, no.

F: No? Oh.

A: No, [there were] (inaudible) and Jim Pappas was -- [Father] Pappas was (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

F: Oh, all right. I think we're [seeking here -- and looking for] is something extended (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) beyond our --

Q: Or involved in any community activities in the Newark area, what --

F: [Why can't I think of any]? Newark -- I don't --

Q: Or did they stay within their own enclave?

F: Yes, they did. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: At that time.

A: At that time, yes.

Q: At that time.

A: Yeah. Can't think of any. I got a story about the [priest who worked there then] (inaudible) [I went to] Greek school maybe four, five years. Three years. I never [heard of] (inaudible) [the older guys got a] (inaudible) and they would get the (inaudible) [get out of school] (inaudible)

Q: Right. Now let me ask you, in high -- you went through the eighth grade. You made friends --

A: [Right].

Q: -- in your elementary school years, right?

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Q: And they were not Greek friends.

A: No, most of them were Italians, actually (inaudible) Jewish friends. And there were, of course, the Greek friends I had, too.

Q: Right.

A: But more -- I had more, actually -- more Italian friends then. [It was] an Italian neighborhood. [But the Greeks came], it was also a Greek neighborhood.

Q: Right.

A: But more Italians. I think we come second (inaudible)
[she's got a whole area there] (inaudible)

Q: Right.

A: -- and that's when the Irish -- and then the Jewish. Jews had the [new stores all around, they] -- yeah, the butcher shop, the -- they tend to have the butcher's shops. [They always had] chicken markets, [and they] -- soda fountains, at that time, the Jews. [But they] --

Q: And the Irish?

A: The Irish. (laughs) (inaudible) They used to hang out at the bar.

M: Yeah.

A: They used to work out of the neighborhood (inaudible) and they would sit there in the morning, have a shot of whiskey and a beer before they go to work. And when it's real cold (inaudible) who's the most popular Irishman in the room? And, you know, this one guy says -- [what that] --

F: Mulligan?

A: Mulligan -- [had] one bottle of hot stuff [at the bar, the middle of the bar], you put it in your beer (inaudible) take the shot, take that, boy, and you're ready, you could build a building in a half-hour. (laughter) And the Greeks [used

to send] -- [kaska] they used to call it, the draft beer.
They'd (inaudible)

Q: [The festa -- or festa].

A: Festa, yes. [Or the Atakos] (inaudible)

M: Let me ask you, were there [kompaneos, Greek kompaneos in there at that time]?

A: Yeah.

M: How many were there?

A: [I've got it marked down].

M: Oh, you have it marked down.

F: (inaudible) marked down.

A: Yeah. There was one in our neighborhood. The biggest one was on Market Street. You know where the [Grants] used to be? [The first Grant? The big Grant]?

M: (inaudible)

A: Oh no, that's the -- there's a Grant -- [there are other names], but they both -- the other one had a Grant, too. But the one on Market Street on the right going down --

M: Okay.

A: -- before Washington Street, between [Plain] and Washington. Upstairs. A big hall. And one by (inaudible) [another]

(inaudible) then they have one on Bradford and -- on Plain Street, [whichever] (inaudible) [but, like, kumba-- kumbalees there] (inaudible) [they're in love with George and that they called it the quieter place]. And then they got some [koppolas] on Market and Plain on top of that -- [there was another one] (inaudible) [but it was on Capitol] (inaudible) [polling center] --

F: I think that one was (inaudible)

A: Yeah, they're all listed as -- okay, and the one that -- [of course, the] (Greek phrase?) [on Wall Street].

Q: You said you went to the bath house.

A: Bath house.

Q: Did many Greeks go to the bath house?

A: No.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: [Maybe every] -- once or twice. [I was lucky that they] took me, you know?

Q: Why?

A: Because I had to go with my friends. I don't know what you're supposed to do there, you know? I don't know [if you had to] take your clothes off [and wrestle with your] clothes on or what. (laughter)

Q: What was it like?

A: It was very good. You'd take a nice hot shower or hot bath. They had swimming, too. They had swimming. But they didn't -- nobody had -- they had cold water. They're all cold water baths. [They all -- at the time], of course, they had their own homes and they'd make sure [that -- the heat] and everything else. But [they were Jewish]. And the other ones (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: You used to tell us stories about [your settlement house] or something -- and go and play ball and --

A: Oh, [Red Cross -- no] --

Q: Where was it?

A: It was the Salvation Army.

Q: Salvation Army

A: On Washington and [Cabot] Street (inaudible) on Washington Street that's like [up on Second on Capitol]. And we'd go there, [it was just the] neighborhood kids. Just us. The whole gym was ours, you know? And we'd take showers there, play basket-- [that's where the Delphi -- I don't know if] (inaudible) [Ricky Allas and Wolf Karalakas] --

M: (inaudible)

A: -- and all those -- they had [the good] basketball team.

M: Right.

A: Champion basketball team.

Q: [Surprised] about that.

A: [Chris Kountess was] -- and of course Costas --

Q: Yeah, Chris Costas.

A: Mike [Meluccas].

Q: Oh yeah.

A: The two [Havalakas] boys, [Walt Karabatos] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Were these -- this was a Greek basketball team?

A: A Greek basketball team. They played the Italians, and they would say [pisho, pisho]! And then the Italians got wise [and -- since pisho means pass, pass, yeah] --

Q: [They know that] (inaudible; laughter) and --

A: At Christmas, they'd give you a present. Gave you a present.

Q: And -- the Red Cross?

A: Yeah.

Q: At the Salvation Army?

A: Salvation Army.

F: Well, was the basketball team organized through the

[Catholic] -- or the church, through the [HEPPA], what was it?

A: No, they organized the -- [from the -- back there -- just] the neighborhood, [back in the] street.

F: Okay.

A: [From back street], yeah. [Most of the back street]. And -- no, the church had -- the [Sons of] (inaudible) we had (inaudible) church (inaudible)

Q: Tell the story about [going to] (inaudible)

A: And then we had the [Junior Honor Hall]. We played the Junior Auto Hall, and there's a soda fountain there. So (inaudible) and we didn't [drag, we'd hang out, a real big bill] -- no more soda (inaudible; laughter)

Q: Let me ask you a question. You said your brother was all-state, or was --

A: He was all-city.

Q: All-city, Newark --

A: Honorable mention for all-state.

Q: From -- in what?

A: [In the same] -- in football -- football, mostly. He was a quarterback.

Q: Of what school?

A: Central High.

Q: Central High School.

M: What year was that again? What year? Do you remember the year?

A: (inaudible) [he beat that other] high school, and [they played an away game] (inaudible) his brother (inaudible) [a friend of mine] and tried to get him into St. Benedict's.

M: Okay.

A: And [for some reason unknown to me, he got a job] (inaudible) [good job, too, so he said that's it. That's it. What year] (inaudible) mother died, yeah, [it is] --

F: In 1940 (inaudible) 1938.

A: [It was 1938].

Q: This is in Central High School in Newark?

A: Central High School.

Q: [In this book it is].

A: Yeah. That's -- and I still occasionally (inaudible)

Q: No, no, [the -- you know]? Something like this definitely (inaudible)

A: Yeah, like the Greeks say, (Greek phrase)

Q: What other memories do you have of living in Newark? Who

were some of your best friends? [Greek] friends?

A: [Ollie Jarvis] was one. Well, actually, my best friends were mostly Italian. [I was] --

Q: Okay, that's [great].

A: [Michael Sera. Oh the best man] (inaudible) two different Italians. I [gave blood to] another friend of mine, Italian.

M: What were their names? Do you remember their names?

A: Yeah. Richard -- Frank [Delabaley] was one. Alex Petrillo I gave blood to. And the other one was [Sal Magreco]. I gave blood with this guy. And [that's of course -- I mean], my brother was in the hospital, he needed blood. Most of the guys were (inaudible) and the boss, the timekeeper (inaudible) well, you call him the timekeeper. He was the boss of the whole group. All right, we're all going up to the hospital tomorrow to give blood. They all went up. All went up. [When his funeral] came around, [we had to bury him]. They came to it. Any time anybody died in the neighborhood, you gave a quarter, half dollar or something (inaudible) they raised over 200 dollars and gave it to me [basically] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) that's a lot money then, too, in those days. It was nice.

Q: What (inaudible)

A: [Greg Motundo] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Motundo,
Michael has a lot to learn. (laughter)

M: That was on West Market Street?

A: West Market Street. Across Market Street (overlapping
dialogue; inaudible)

Q: [I remember it] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: -- street from the (inaudible)

M: Okay.

A: (inaudible)

M: Right.

A: But Charlie Motundo will never ask you for money. He must
have had a book -- I'll bet you today (inaudible) money.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible) [no, we moved Louie] -- my
brothers didn't like where he was buried the first time. So
my brother George and I (inaudible) you want to move? Okay.
We arranged (inaudible) [and up to where] my mother [said
it's too wet down there], said it's [always] (inaudible) 150
dollars. When (inaudible) George from Woodlawn up to
(inaudible)

F: No (inaudible) [something like 150], yeah.

A: 1500 dollars, and -- just to move him!

M: [It's going crazy].

F: [The profits for -- you know, are] --

A: You need 5000 dollars!

F: At least.

Q: [And that's] -- exactly! At least!

A: [I mean, let's think about it, though, now, about]
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

F: And they tell you to shop for caskets. We're thinking seriously of doing this, you know? Go to a wholesale place and shop for caskets and all that.

Q: I know!

F: I mean, we have our plot and all (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: Not -- [you have this -- you have to pay] (inaudible)

Q: You have to pay to open it? Just to have (inaudible)

A: Well, that's right. Yeah, [they always have room]
(inaudible) with Louie they had (inaudible) [and the]
(inaudible) oh, to open it!

F: Yeah.

A: 800 dollars on the --

M: Yeah.

A: -- [and yours]!

Q: I know! I know! I know.

A: [It was -- actually we're] sick about it.

M: It's getting out of hand.

A: Yeah.

Q: Any other stories of things that you did?

F: Tell the story about when your mother used to do [homework with] --

A: Oh yeah.

F: (inaudible) and you were there, too? Okay, yeah, this is --

A: [The back porch] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) we would be inside the other [buganyatsa] -- same landlord, but the little back porches, [where it's], you know -- [alley, we're here, and they'd come in that way], and almost everybody -- and Saturday morning especially -- all you could hear is Italian music. Everybody -- beautiful music, okay? Well, so my mother is doing a lot of embroidery, and we all helped out, and there's another lady [that bought it], had a big family -- she used to do a lot of embroidery. So they'd see each other in the morning and she'd yell, "Hello, [Liza]!" "Hello, Maria." And she'd say --

Q: They're not Greek.

A: Yeah. And then she said, hey, look at, [Anne, go over]

(inaudible) she told her. (laughter) And they said,
(Italian phrase) Angelo! She'd start signing. [Beautiful].
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

F: -- used to embroider. Even Teddy, even me.

A: Yeah, we all (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) [I liked to
embroider] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: [Do you have any of them saved, Teddy]? (overlapping
dialogue; inaudible)

A: [Now there's something] --

F: [The factory].

A: Yeah, the factory would supply it and you did the embroidery
and it goes back to (inaudible) [we get paid for] --

Q: Oh, what factory was this?

A: I don't know. And you get paid for every piece that you
did. And there was [another factory] on -- it must have
been for the First Army there -- that they would make Army
uniforms on Plain Street somewhere, near New Street, and
they'd send -- you'd take all the thread, [blue] thread and
[fold them] and send it back.

M: [Was Singer's] located there? Singer's sewing machines and
-- Singer's --

A: No, this (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

M: Let me ask you before we finish up. How long did you have your business in [Merritt Place for us]?

A: I started in -- [what, in '75]? And how long am I retired now? Fifteen years, [then]?

F: What, dear?

A: How many years ago did I retire?

F: It was about 14, 15 years ago. You were 72 when you retired.

A: [Oh, right].

F: 72 --

A: I was 25 when I started, so [45, 50] years [in the trade].

Q: (inaudible) [on the] --

A: No.

F: No.

A: No.

F: (inaudible)

Q: Right.

F: They were [bought up with the Berlin] --

A: [On the -- on] --

Q: (inaudible) right.

A: [Next to the bank].

Q: Right, right, I remember that building on the --

F: [New office].

A: And we had greeting cards there, Hallmark cards [was beginning], she'd take care of that. She used to take care of (inaudible) (laughter)

F: [Well] (inaudible) owned that building. [Right, but did] (inaudible) [the Malamas] restaurant? [I thought we didn't]. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: I thought I saw Malamas (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: -- [restaurant. There's another place] --

F: He's a nice old man. Really nice (inaudible)

A: Oh, but he's got the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

F: -- [Dimatta's deli, yeah].

M: And [Spirioporos] worked with you [all those] --

A: [Spirioporos was there] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) we were like brothers, yeah, I mean -- well, he was (inaudible) businesses and --

Q: Right, he had [Melanous Luncheonette] --

A: Yeah.

Q: I remember that, too. [I mean] --

A: [And one of the churches], they bought him out. They didn't

have to buy -- he could have kept his share in (inaudible)

Q: [I see].

A: [And if the Army takes it and you're still a partner there]

--

M: Right.

Q: Did you go into the Army?

A: No. I got one deferment and it lasted six months
(inaudible) six months and then they wouldn't take anybody
over thirty years old [and] (inaudible) (laughter)

Q: Yeah, they didn't take -- yeah, they didn't take my father
because he was too small. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

F: [Did he want a deferment]?

Q: No, no, no. (laughter) I'm talking about the Second World
War.

F: That's right.

A: (inaudible)

Q: Were you involved in anything with the group war relief when
they would --

A: We'd do a lot of [planning], that's all.

M: We tried to find out -- because someone said that they had a
dance for the Greek war relief --

F: [Well, they loved dancing].

M: And they had the Andrews Sisters and I think (inaudible) do you remember that story?

A: No, but I remember the Andrews (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) ballplayer -- what's the Greek ballplayer? [Not] (inaudible) I forget his name. My brother George (inaudible) committee and a couple of others.

M: [Destreagos]?

A: No, no. [Let me see that for a second].

M: Go ahead.

A: But we (inaudible) the Andrews Sisters, and I used to have a picture of (inaudible) because [of his] good ballplayer.

M: Okay.

A: And the Andrews Sisters [and that], but I remember --

Q: Yes, I remember, because they were [at a] dance because --

A: Oh yeah?

Q: -- my other brother Gus was there --

A: Who?

Q: I would (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) went up to talk to them because he was a musician, but he was only about 15 years old --

A: [He was very good].

Q: -- [and they made an appointment] for him to go to New York to see them.

A: Okay.

Q: And there was a dance in Newark, and I think it was a Greek boy who made that.

M: Someone told me that there was a Greek war relief dance --

Q: Yeah --

End - Ted Bravakis